JESUS CHRIST—HIS PERSON AND HIS WORK.

Socrates was anxious to hide his own person, and place the whole weight of his teaching on his philosophy—his system. But that was a mistake. When men lost the inspiration of his personality there was no power in his philosophy to make them virtuous. It is God's purpose to reform the world through the inspiration that flows from a Person. Apart from Jesus Christ there is no one great enough or perfect enough to be the source of such inspiration. He is free from all peculiarities that would limit the sphere of his influence.

1. He has no personal characteristics. Every other man has some peculiarity which separates him from everybody else. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are separated from one another by certain traits which are peculiar to them as individuals. Moses, David, Elijah, Peter, Paul and James, all differ through certain peculiarities of character. Not one of them would serve as a universal type; the character is not proportionate or perfect. But Jesus Christ is free from all personal peculiarities.

2. He has no distinction of beauty. There are two kinds of beauty—the sublime and the pretty, the majestic and the tender. There are scenes in Nature characterized by a majestic loftiness, where wild cataracts, rugged rocks, prominent mountains, cast their somber shadows on the modest valleys sheltering themselves in silent obedience at their feet. Other scenes are characterized by the tender, the fair and the bright. These two types of beauty are also found in the moral world. The one class of virtues is strong, majestic, sublime; the other is sweet, tender and gracious. And as are the virtues, so are those who wear them. Some men are like the rugged mountains—it would be folly to expect any tenderness in them; while others are like the valley full of the clover which is so fair and fragrant, and yet without strength. In Jesus Christ we find the mountain and the valley, the strong and the tender, the sublime and the fair.

3. He has no peculiarities of race. Every nation has its own characteristics which separate it from every other nation. Everybody partakes to a certain degree of the peculiarities of the race to which he belongs. Jesus Christ is the only one who ever lived that completely escaped these racial peculiarities. This is the testimony of the ablest critics. He is absolutely free. As Goldwin Smith points out, He was brought up in a country where the influences of three different nations converged,—the Jews, the Greeks, and the Romans. If He were man, and only man, it would be infinitely improbable that He would escape every aspect of the formalism of the Jews, the national pride of the Romans, and the intellectual pride of the Greeks. But Jesus Christ escaped them all. He is the Son of Man in the highest sense of the term.

If any man feels a desire to hold communion with any moral excellence, he need not search for it anywhere else. All is found in Jesus. Every object in Nature draws its color from the sun. Each one according to its nature and its composition has power to draw certain rays, and to repel others; and that is what constitutes its color. So is it from Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, that all the colors of the Church come. When He shines upon the soul, all the graces of the Christian begin to bloom, wearing their special colors. One will draw the rays of patience; another will draw the color of brotherly love. While the one in his zeal for God's glory is seen to blush like the rose, the other, like the lily, hides himself in the folds of humility. But however

fair the flowers may be, they have all received their colors from the Sun of Righteousness.

Rev. David Saunders, D. D.

"Some years ago we had the privilege and pleasure of seeing Mont Blanc, the White Mountain. After returning home, and looking again on our own dear old mountains, we could not help feeling that an element of change had come in. Not that we loved our own mountains any less after seeing the great White Mountain. If anything, we loved them more. But notwithstanding there is some change. And it is this. The chief attraction of our own mountains today is that they suggest the White Mountain. It must be acknowledged that they are not very much like them. They are not as tall, they are not as white, and they are not white all the time, as he is. But there is something in our mountains when under their crown of snow in the winter, which suggests the White Mountain to those who have seen it.

"So were you once well acquainted with many a mountain among the old saints. You had not at the time seen the great White Mountain itself. Yet you had heard of it, and felt a deep reverence and love towards it; and that, probably, because you thought He looked like the best people you had known on earth—the father, the mother, the elder, the teacher or the minister. Now your eyes have seen the King in His glory. What is the result? Less love toward the father, the mother and the teacher? Ah, no, much more. But you love them for a new reason. Once you loved Jesus Christ because He was like them; now you love them because they are like Jesus Christ. And they are not so much like Him after all. They are not as tall, they are not as pure, and they are not pure all the time, as He is. But there is in them, nevertheless, something which suggests Him."

Prof. Richard Morris, M. A., B. D.

"Men develop in accordance with the state and the circumstances in which they appear. They grow according to the nature of the soil from which they spring. The learning of the child in his early days, and of the man in his mature years, is conditioned by the influence of parents, relatives, friends, and surroundings. A prince of royal blood is not expected to issue from a common cottage, nor do we expect a log cabin to be the nursery of a gentleman. We do not expect to find a learned professor nurtured in a poor lodging house, nor a pattern of morality reared in the abode of sin. The circumstances in which the child finds itself are the mold from which the man receives his form.

"But here we have an exception without any explanation for it. The Lord of Nature is found in swaddling clothes resting in a manger; the Gentleman appearing in a carpenter's cottage; unexampled majesty arising from among the lowliest; the Teacher, like whom there was no other, shining in the midst of the unlettered; an unrivalled philosopher among the simple; an example of holiness coming out of Nazareth."

Rev. David Rees.

"When Napoleon died on St. Helena, a messenger burst into a company in Paris to tell what had happened. A lady of the party cried out, "What an event!" But

Talleyrand, who was present, said, "Not an event, Madam; only a piece of news." That a Napoleon should die, that an earthquake should take place, that an empire should break up,—these things are pieces of news. They are curious, but they are not events. They do not make epochs. They do not alter the relations between God and man. The Incarnation was an event. It was like the Creation, it was like the fall of mankind, it was like the regeneration of a soul, it was an eternal transaction making an everlasting difference in the relations between God and man. Was it simply the birth of a child at Bethlehem? Was it an addition of a carpenter to the population of Palestine? Was it the beginning of a life that attracted the attention of all the chief people of Jewry? Was it the beginning of a tragedy which culminated on Calvary? Yes, it was this. But it was the most momentous event in history. "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth."—The Christian World Pulpit, Vol. 81, Page 180.

Rev. Newton H. Marshall, M. A., Ph. D.

"We are reminded of David Hume, who persuaded his mother to give up Christ because He was only a myth. When she came to die she said to him standing by her bedside, 'David, you prevailed upon me to give up Christ. Whom do you give me instead, for some one I need?' David Hume was dumb. No one can supersede the Christ. No one can rob us of Him. He remains an Eternal Fact which cannot be shaken."—The Christian World Pulpit, Vol. 75, Page 404.

Rev. J. Westbury Jones, M. A.

"Very early in the last century there was in one of the cathedrals of Europe a wonderful organ whose magnificence was known to all the musicians on that continent. The organist had held the office for 40 years, and thought the world of his instrument. He had for many years made it a rule that no one but himself should play it. He carried the keys with him wherever he went, and he would not trust them to anybody else. One day a stranger called upon him desiring to see the organ. 'Yes,' said the old organist, 'you shall see and hear it, but there is no one to touch it but myself.' 'I am very sorry to hear that,' said the stranger, 'for I have traveled a long distance with the purpose of having the pleasure of playing it.' 'I am very sorry,' said the old organist, 'but that has been my rule for many years.' However, after long argument and persuasion, the stranger succeeded in obtaining his desire. He sat himself at the organ, the old organist looking and listening. He at once saw that the stranger was master of his work. He played on and on, as if he had met an old friend who was pouring out to him the secrets of his heart in the most beautiful music. There was in the organ a wealth of resources that the old organist had never dreamt of, and he was lost in wonder and admiration. When he had finished playing, the stranger presents the keys to the old organist, thanking him for his kindness. But before accepting them the old organist turns to him and asks, 'Who are you, sir?' 'My name,' said the stranger, 'is Felix Mendelssohn.' 'You keep the keys, sir,' said the old organist, 'and forgive the servant for being so reluctant to give up the keys to the master.'

"Our soul is an organ whose builder and maker is God. The builder has put into it the notes of time and eternity, and it can produce the sweetest music in God's

universe. He has given to thee the responsibility of keeping the keys. Do not allow the devil to play upon it. Watch lest the flesh tarnish it with its stained fingers. Keep it from being taken over by the world. It would be a pity that such a magnificent instrument should give only discords forever. Present the keys to the Maker, and ask the Eternal Spirit to set it in tune. The anthem of infinite love is the only one worthy of its capacities; the harmonies of Bethlehem and Calvary alone can do justice to its resources. The great heights of His Godhead and the great depth of His obedience is the only scale that can show forth the wealth of its notes."

Rev. John Williams, D. D.

"Before the harp can pour out its music all the strings must be brought into proper relationship one with another. In addition to that there must be a master hand to play upon them. To receive a proper conception of the greatness and glory of Creation, one must first of all see the laws of Nature in their relation to one another and to God. Even so, to see the glory of the Person of Christ, the testimonies of inspiration must be viewed in their proper relation to the holiness of God. Prophets and patriarchs have interpreted the meaning of a few words; but theirs was the hand of a novice passing over the strings of the harp. In the glorious character of Christ all the possible virtues of life are united in their true relation. It is said that physicians now and again have carried the germs of disease in their clothes—that even as they were trying to prevent it, they were actually spreading the disease. Humanity has been deceived by many teachers and reformers and apostles, for they carried with them the germs of the disease which they were trying to overcome. Christ made only a few claims, but He guarded the glory of His character with a jealous care—a character which has been searched through and through; a character that is a perfect example for all believers. His words were the words of unstained lips; His deeds were the outcome of a holy mind and a clean body."

Rev. Benjamin Davies, D. D.

SUBJECTS FOR APRIL.

2. The Fatherhood of God.
3. Prayer—Its Meaning and Radius.
4. Faith—Its Source and Reality.
5. Strength and Beauty—Proportion in Character.